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Navajo President Signs Resolution Creating Health Emergency for Administration Building Two

WINDOW ROCK, Ariz. – Navajo Nation President Ben Shelly signed a resolution declaring a public health state of emergency for Administration Building Two because of fungi found in the building.

The resolution was signed Monday morning and closes Administration Building Two so remediation and renovation can begin, which should take about six months.

“We need to ensure the health of our Navajo Nation employees is secured. Once it was reported that conditions in Administration Building Two had mold, we formulated a plan for our employees to temporarily relocate so the building can be remediated and renovated,” President Shelly said.

Administration Building Two was ordered closed by the Navajo Occupational Safety and Health Administration (NOSHA) on Dec. 27 and a Jan. 4 meeting finalized plans for the more than 12 programs and about 200 workers to begin moving into different office buildings in the Window Rock area.

The Friday meeting involved the Navajo Division of Health, Department of Public Health, Facilities Maintenance, Division of Community Development, NOSHA, Office of President and Vice President and the Department of Public Safety. The offices will coordinate with each other while the building is being remediated and renovated.

“We’re following the guidance provided through a Continuity of Operations plan and checklists to be sent out from the Department of Emergency Management. We also are going to ensure that we communicate with affected employees and the general public about what our immediate and longer term plans are going to be. We need to make sure this happens so the essential services we provide the people will continue uninterrupted,” Chief of Staff Arbin Mitchell said.

“The Navajo Nation Commission on Emergency Management hereby declares a Public Health State of Emergency for the Navajo Nation Tribal Administration Building

Number Two due to substantial public health and safety risks from continued exposure to significant amounts of mold impacting building occupants,” the resolution stated.

The declaration also states that the Navajo Nation needs to provide resources to protect the health, safety and welfare of Navajo citizens regarding Administration Building Two.

Employees are asked to follow procedures when taking items from the building to reduce the risk of cross contamination.

“We need to reduce the risk as much as possible. The key people that would be affected by this would be immunocompromised persons and those with respiratory illnesses.” said Department of Emergency Management Director, Rose Whitehair.

The remediation and renovation is expected to cost about \$12 million, which includes renovation costs for Administration Building One. Administration Building One was closed in September 2010 after mold was discovered.

Employees should expect to move back in Administration Building Two in about six months.

According to a report from EnviroScience Consulting Inc., Administration Building 2 has water damage and fungal spores. The report recommends the roof, the structure and electrical system all should be inspected since the building is about 30 years old. Furthermore, the report recommended that the HVAC system be replaced.

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